

The applicant has still not adequately provided answers to mine and many other interested parties concerns/objections. As this is my final chance to have any say in this matter I will reiterate the issues that I feel really must be addressed before the application can or should be approved.

The applicant has not provided sufficient evidence that non BMV sites were comprehensively considered before choosing the land that is included in this proposal. Successive governments, including the current one, have said that wherever possible best and most versatile agricultural land should not be used for ground solar installations. 74% of the EPE proposal is on BMV farmland and this project should therefore not even be considered for approval

There are already 11 operational ground mounted solar farms in operation within a 15 mile radius of Pertenhall. There are a further 15 approved but not operational solar developments, and 6 more that are currently proposed This area is already providing a significant solar contribution, if the East Park Energy proposal were to go ahead the area would become subsumed by solar. On this basis alone the East Park Energy scheme should not be allowed.

The recent increase in hot dry summers, which are predicted to continue, has lead to increasing numbers of wildfires. There was a significant wildfire on Site A this summer which due to the diligence and hard work of local residents was contained before both the fire brigade arrived and more importantly before it reached the nearby houses. A fire at an existing solar farm was caused by damage to solar panel wiring, most likely caused by animals This has highlighted concerns to me regarding fire safety. The applicant does not appear to have any fire fighting provisions other than for the BESS. If this particular fire had occurred when the solar panels and security fencing was in place the ability to tackle the fire would be hindered but more worryingly any pedestrians/horse riders using the fenced off footpath could have been trapped with unthinkable consequences. The applicant must be required to provide adequate fire fighting and prevention measures across the whole site.

The applicant has provided no fiscal security. A solar power station in Portugal has gone into insolvency as the project generated less power than expected, suffered technical failures and fires, and saw revenue hit by falling electricity prices. If a solar facility in Portugal with substantially more sunshine and daylight hours than we have in this country can fail, how on earth can the East Park Energy project expect to generate the predicted 400 MW and justify the loss of productive farmland. The applicant must be required to provide secured, ring fenced fiscal bond that will guarantee the removal and disposal of the equipment at the end of the scheme whether it be at the end of the 40 years or earlier.

The local community should not have to live with a failing eyesore, and the tax payer should not have to pick up the cost of disposal if the developer goes bankrupt.

As the applicant has still not decided on the type of panel to be installed they are unable to responded to my request for confirmation at which maximum temperature the panels can safely function. Once again this is an example of the lack of credible information from the applicant to justify this scheme.

The developer continues to maintain that the visual impact of the development will be negligible after the screening is in place. It is obvious to anyone who walks the site that this is not true. The impact will be huge in the most negative way imaginable. To walk/ride through tunnels of wire fencing in no way compares to that of going across vast swathes of open countryside. To imply that the effect of losing this amenity is insignificant is offensive in the least to those of us who live and benefit from having access to this open space. The video footage supplied by the applicant does not give a true impression of the land affected. I would ask the Inspector to ensure he has visited the full site before making any decision on this application.

The Applicant has still not confirmed the plant stock that will be supplied for screening – the size and species that will be selected. At this stage of the process such decisions should already have been made. Not only should the plant stock be decided by now but also the type of grass and the materials for footpaths - yet another example of “to be decided post DCO”

The impact of the development on local transport routes has been vastly underestimated by the developer. The local roads are small, winding and not able to take the volume of traffic that this development will require without there being highly significant disruption and risk of accidents. The B645 is a well known accident black spot and in places simply not wide enough for the size of the transport vehicles to travel without impeding oncoming traffic. As a regular user of the roads, even using the applicants proposed figures for construction traffic, I can assure the Inspector that the local roads will not be able to cope with the increase to traffic levels, there will without doubt be increased risk to road users.

There are many issues that the Applicant continues to reply “will be answered at a later stage” but at this late stage in the process I maintain any competent party should be in a better position to provide more detailed answers.

For the reasons above and many more I ask the Inspector to refuse this application.